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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

Gen. H. Thomas Post

OF THE

GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC,

AT SAN FRANCISCO,

October 30th, 1883,

BY

Chancellor Hartson.

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THE HISTORY
OF
Our Government and its Perils,
AND
THE FRUIT OF THE GREAT CONFLICT.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:—

A review of the history of the rise and progress of our government and of the development of our institutions, in their grandeur and power, ought to be a subject of both interest and pleasure to those upon whom is conferred the privilege of their enjoyment.

Fortunately we depend not upon legends transmitted from age to age, like the Egyptian, Grecian or Roman citizen, for a knowledge of our origin; nor do we have to search any musty antiquarian records to learn when the foundations of our government were laid, or for the knowledge of the virtues and exploits of its illustrious founders; but the transformation from British colonies to American commonwealths, from Crown dependencies to sovereign States, is the work of our own immediate ancestors, whose names, eloquent ap-

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peals, daring deeds, and grand achievements are fresh in our minds, and whose venerable forms we, in imagination, can almost behold. We can clearly trace its gradual development from conception to reality; from the blossom to the rich, ripe fruit; from a germ to the wide-spreading, stately tree; from the embryo to a grand republic; amid agitation, difficulties, dangers, and wars of the most desperate and bloody character.

THE FIRST CONGRESS.

The distance of the English throne from the American colonies rendered the administration of their affairs difficult, perplexing, and unsatisfactory. Her unjust methods of governing the colonies excited the most bitter and resentful spirit on the part of the colonists, which in turn produced the most aggressive and revengeful acts on the part of the British Ministry.

On the fifth day of September, 1774, in accordance with Colonial resolutions or enactments, there assembled at Philadelphia fifty delegates from the thirteen Colonies, composing the first Colonial Congress, to devise measures of resistance to the encroachments and despotism of the British ministry and throne. Peyton Randolph, of Virginia, was elected president.

Among the members of this Congress, Washington, Adams, Sherman, Jay, Livingston, Lee, Rutledge and Patrick Henry were conspicuous.

There first met in deliberative assembly the champions of liberty and constitutional law. There the gallant sons of Massachusetts first met the spartan

band of Virginia in fraternal embrace. There heroes, in the face of dungeons, scaffolds and confiscations laid the foundation of this republic.

So great was their friendship and sympathy and interest in a common cause, that the first day of June, 1774—the day when the Port of Boston was to be closed by Act of Parliament, for throwing the tribute tea overboard—was, by an legislative act of Virginia, made a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer.

This was the first act in massing their forces and in the unification of the people in opposition to tyranny and in support of their rights, resulting in the establishment of an independent and free government.

Here were enunciated the elementary principles subsequently embodied in the Declaration of Independence, and in the Constitution of the United States.

There, in the light of subsequent events, we imagine that we see Patrick Henry pouring forth his fierce invectives against the British ministers and his anathemas against British misrule and oppression. In the retrospect we seem to see the eloquent, profound and erudite John Adams expounding the rights of the Colonies and portraying in his gorgeous and impressive diction the violation of charters and constitutional laws by imposing burthens on them greater than on the residents of the mother country, in taxation without consent or representation, and in the appointment and removal of sheriffs, magistrates, members of council and governors by the Crown, so that all acts of legislation and judicature should emanate from the throne.

There also appeared the majestic and gallant Washington, ready to perform such valorous deeds as should entitle him to the enviable distinction: "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen!"

What a sublime spectacle is here exhibited. These heroic men, trusting in the justice of their cause, and in the constancy and perseverance of the people, confronted a power whose veteran army knew no defeat; whose navy had been triumphant on every sea; a nation that, through her prowess, wealth and skill, had become renowned in every part of the habitable globe.

Undismayed by the minions of the Crown, and unappalled by its armies, their discussions and deliberations were earnest and animated, (but not incautious), lofty and far reaching, and were followed with clear, bold and fearless declarations and resolutions, leading on to freedom and independence.

CONGRESSIONAL DECLARATIONS OF 1774.

On the fourteenth day of October, 1774, Congress, in a series of resolutions, declared that the English Colonies in North America, were, by the immutable laws of Nature, the principles of the English Constitution and their several charters, entitled to life, liberty and property; that the foundation of English liberty, and of all free governments, is a right in the people to participate in their legislative councils; and that England did not have the right to tax her subjects in America without their consent.

Congress charged the King with official exactions, with military violence, with unheard-of proscriptions; and Parliament with abridging their rights and liberties, with establishing a system of oppression and usurpation, inevitably leading to the enslavement of America — and enumerated a long list of Parliamentary acts, which encroached upon the rights and liberties of the colonies, characterizing them as impolitic, unjust and cruel, as well as unconstitutional, and most dangerous and destructive to American rights; and demanded their repeal as a condition of the restoration of harmony and union and obedience.

Congress further gave notice to Britain that unless she refrained from her obnoxious acts and legislation, that at the next meeting of Congress, America would adopt measures in vindication of her rights and in the protection of her liberties.

This statement of rights and grievances was received by the proud King and his haughty Ministers with sneers and derision.

Here we see an exhibition of that pride which goeth before destruction, and that haughty spirit that precedes a fall.

The remonstrances and expostulations and petitions of the colonists were answered with frowns and retaliatory measures of the most vindictive and oppressive character.

Whatever perils and sufferings and losses might attend a separation of the colonies from the Crown, they seemed more tolerable than their present wretched condition. Necessity and self-preservation

forced them to sever the chains that bound them to a despotism.

Previous to the dissolution of the first Congress, on the twenty-sixth day of October, 1774, a resolution was passed that Congress should re-convene on the tenth day of May, 1775, unless Parliament should, by redressing their grievances and granting their petitions, make it unnecessary.

THE SESSION OF CONGRESS OF 1775.

In May, 1775, Congress again met. Their petitions and remonstrances were disregarded or treated with scorn and contempt. Parliament determined to enforce its arbitrary and unjust measures with increased rigor. Blood had already been shed at Lexington.

Preparations were now made for armed resistance. Steps were at once taken to organize an army. Washington, who had gained much renown in the French and Indian Wars—especially in the bloody field so disastrous to Braddock's fame—was appointed Commander-in-Chief. By Acts of Congress, three millions of dollars of paper money were authorized to be issued; a general post-office was established; rules were adopted for the regulation of the navy; a treasury department was created, and an initial, rudimentary government organized.

The colonies were declared by the King to be in a state of rebellion, and war measures were adopted by the British Government. All hopes of reconciliation perished. Thus a most furious, desperate and bloody war was inaugurated between the colonies and mother country.

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

The colonies, exasperated beyond endurance, preferred the chances of death in asserting their liberty and independence, to further subjection to British power and dominion. Therefore, in June, 1776, Congress appointed Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston a committee to prepare a declaration "that these colonies are, and of a right ought to be, free and independent States."

The *Declaration of Independence* was accordingly prepared and adopted by Congress on the ever memorable Fourth of July, 1776.

Of this Congress John Hancock, of Massachusetts, had the honor of being President, and his name comes first among those ever illustrious and world renowned men who pledged their fortunes and imperiled their lives in the cause of independence.

Amid the plaudits of their countrymen and the admiration and wonder of mankind, fifty-six heroic representatives signed this warrant of death or roster of imperishable fame, as the Sword and Providence might determine.

Under these remarkable circumstances this most extraordinary and important document was prepared, solemnized, and published to the world, and its influence and power are everywhere felt, and its consequences are being transmitted to all ages. To this event we refer all of the succeeding glories of the republic.

In this charter the right of man to life, liberty and

the pursuit of happiness; the purposes of establishing governments; the causes that justify a change of government—that vindicate revolution; the impeachment of the King; the severing allegiance from the throne; the independence of the colonies, and the sublime faith and unfaltering confidence in Jehovah—are expressed in dignified and manly terms and spirit, exhibiting the exalted purposes, the well-fixed resolution and dauntless character of the authors of this immortal document.

It required repeated acts of injustice and oppression—remonstrances unheeded and unnoticed, petitions unanswered and disregarded, rebuff and scorn, time and opportunity for discussion and reflection—before the colonists were weaned from the mother country and prepared for independence.

So it has required time and trial and experience to cause our government to grow from its simple beginning to its present grand proportions.

The economies and necessities of the people have improved and enlarged it until with its (fifteen) amendments, corresponding to the ever-changing and ever-expanding conditions of the commonwealth, it approximates nearer to perfection than any other human government of this or any historical age.

THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION.

At the time of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, each State possessed absolute power within its limits. Congress possessed no compulsory power over the States.

Congress continued its sessions and passed such bills as the public interest and necessities required, depending upon State Legislatures to co-operate and enforce congressional measures.

The influence of common interest, and the fear arising from common danger, impelled the States at first to carry out promptly the measures of Congress.

After enduring the fatigues and hardships of war for a long time, the fervor and enthusiasm of the people began to wane, and some of the States failed or declined to raise their quota of soldiers and money, thus embarrassing the government in a high degree.

As the mariner, tossed for days and weeks on a tempestuous sea, through fatigue and suffering becomes disheartened and is ready to sink down in despair, so with some of the soldiers of the Union.

Thus there appeared an absolute necessity for a stronger government—a government with enlarged powers—a more compact, vigorous and coercive form of government.

To remedy evident defects and prevent evils, Congress, on the fifteenth day of November, 1777, agreed to the Articles of Confederation, which were ratified by all of these States. This Confederacy was styled

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

The States, by this compact, “entered into a firm league of friendship with each other, for their common defense, the security of their liberties, and their mutual and general welfare.”

While these Articles contained many of the impor-

tant powers afterwards incorporated in the present Constitution, they also contained some very dissimilar provisions.

The Articles of Confederation provided that Congress should be composed of not less than two nor more than seven delegates from each State; that they should be annually appointed in such manner as the State Legislatures might direct; that in determining questions each State should have but one vote, and that be the vote of the majority of its members; that all questions between States concerning boundary, jurisdiction, or any other cause, should be determined by commissioners; that the assent of nine States should be necessary to engage in war; coin money; emit bills; borrow money; and for many other purposes; and that a committee of one delegate should be appointed from each State, with authority, during recess of Congress, to perform all acts that might be executed by a majority vote of the delegates of Congress in regular session.

The inherent and fatal defect in this system was that the Confederacy had no power to levy taxes and collect revenue.

The exercise of the function of taxation, one of the chief causes of the revolution, was jealously reserved to the States, to be exercised at their volition. The want of this power paralyzed the action of Congress, and brought the Confederacy into disrepute, and the country to the verge of ruin.

Chief Justice Marshall said "that there was an utter want of all coercive authority to carry into effect its

own constitutional measures;" and, "further, that a government authorized to declare war, but relying upon independent States to prosecute it, capable of contracting debts and of pledging the public faith for their payment—but depending upon thirteen distinct sovereignties for the preservation of that faith—could only be rescued from ignominy and contempt by finding those sovereignties administered by men exempt from the passions incident to human nature."

In the year 1783, the treaty of peace and amity was concluded between the United States and Great Britain. The war virtually closed with the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, at Yorktown, October 19, 1781.

Then the federal treasury was empty, the faith of the nation was broken, the public burthens were great and increasing, and there was no possible relief under the organic law of the nation.

Notwithstanding the public distress, the total inadequacy of the present system to afford relief, and their constantly increasing embarrassments, there was a strong disinclination on the part of the States to endow the general government with the extraordinary but necessary powers afterward conferred.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

On the fourteenth day of May, 1787, the Constitutional Convention met, in accordance with a previous resolution of Congress, and resolved "to establish a national government, with supreme judicial legislative and executive powers."

There were in this convention Washington, Frank-

lin, Randolph, Madison, Sherman, Hamilton, Pinckney, Mason, Rutledge, and many of the most renowned men of the Revolution.

These patriots, blessed with rare powers as soldiers and statesmen, highly endowed for their great work with learning, experience and wisdom—after four months of earnest deliberation on the subject of government, in which they had been so thoroughly trained and versed, considered the many ideas, principles, forms and systems presented, and from all eliminated the present Constitution of the United States, and on the seventeenth day of September, 1787, presented the same to Congress with their approval, recommending its adoption, which was ratified in due time by all the States, and became the supreme law of the land, and, with its various amendments, is still paramount and supreme.

As all are familiar with our most complete and admirable system of government, embracing its executive, legislative and judicial departments, with their subdivisions established for the convenience of administration, I will neither waste the time nor weary you with explanation or description of the Constitution.

Thus we trace the successive steps in the establishment of this magnificent system of government of ours. The Constitution of the United States is the last and highest state of progressive development of constitutional government.

Its foundations were laid deep and strong and permanent in the justice and intelligence of our forefathers. Pillar after pillar was erected in this edifice

of liberty as the power of the throne relaxed, and as the people learned to unite individual security, national sovereignty and State rights in harmonious union, so as to promote the highest welfare of the individual State and nation.

SLAVERY IN THE CONSTITUTION.

No accurate description can be given of the organic structure of the Republic, or of the great and controlling influences and powers that have prevailed in this country, from the establishment of the Government down to the beginning of the great Rebellion, without reference to the Institution of Slavery. Its course is a matter of history, and we cannot ignore or efface it if we would.

African slavery was early planted in America by British merchants, under the British flag. There were slaves in all the colonies at the beginning of the Revolution. "The irrepressible conflict" then began, and the institution was a fruitful source of fearful, social political and governmental disturbance and discord at every period of our existence until washed from the escutcheon of our nation by the blood of patriots and heroes on a hundred battle fields.

During the Revolution, slavery proved to be our chief cause of weakness and peril. The concentration of slaves in the Southern States endangered the safety, excited the fears, and paralyzed the energies of Southern patriots.

New England, with less population than Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia, furnished double their number of soldiers to fight in the common cause.

EMANCIPATION AND PROHIBITION.

When the colonies became States of the Union they began to prohibit slave importation and manumit the slaves.

In the year 1779, Thomas Jefferson, chairman of a committee to revise the laws of Virginia, embodied in the code a clause that the children of all slaves, born after the adoption of the code, should be free. This feature of the code was stricken out, notwithstanding the solemn protest of Jefferson, who said: "The day is not far distant when Virginia must bear and adopt emancipation, or worse will follow. Nothing is more certainly written in the Book of Fate than that these people are to be free. It is in our power to direct the process of emancipation peaceably and in such slow degree as that the evil will wear off insensibly. If, on the contrary, it is left to force itself on, human nature must shudder at the prospect held up."

As early as 1780 Massachusetts abolished slavery. In the same year Pennsylvania passed an act of gradual emancipation. All the northern States pursued the same course.

Virginia, in the year 1778, passed an act, introduced by Jefferson, making foreign slave trade piracy. North Carolina and Maryland passed like acts. In 1807, nearly twenty years thereafter, England, after a fierce parliamentary struggle, passed a similar bill introduced into Parliament fourteen years before by Wilberforce.

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

Jefferson, in his original draft of the Declaration of Independence, made this the most grave and offensive charge: "That the king had waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating the most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who had never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere. And that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished dye, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us."

As some of the colonists, especially in South Carolina and Georgia, looked with complacency upon the institution, it was thought prudent to omit everything that might create difference and dissension, and impair the unity and strength of the colonies in the fierce struggle with Britain. The question of independence was for the time being supreme, and all other questions subordinate. For this reason all reference to slavery in the Declaration of Independence was omitted. And for the same reason it was omitted in the Articles of Confederation.

SLAVERY IN THE TERRITORIES.

In March, 1784, Mr. Jefferson, chairman of a committee in Congress to report an ordinance for the government of all of the territory of the United States, reported, among other fundamental provisions for forming States from said territory, "that, after the year 1800, there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any of said States, otherwise than

in the punishment of crimes." To establish this interdiction the majority vote of a majority of the thirteen States was required. Sixteen delegates voted for the proposition and seven against it, and the States stood six for it and three against it. Thus the restriction failed, as one vote more was wanting to constitute a majority of the States. In 1787, however, the same restriction was applied to all of the territory lying north-west of the Ohio River, by a unanimous vote.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

At the time of the formation of the Constitution this vexed question reappeared and caused the most intense excitement and awakened fearful apprehensions and forebodings. Most of the great men of the nation regarded slavery as wrong, and believed, if fostered by the Government, it would eventually lead to calamities of the most shocking character.

Two States, South Carolina and Georgia, were then propagandists of the institution, and insisted that it should be recognized in the Constitution and have a place among the legitimate powers and prerogatives thereof.

This question was discussed with great freedom by the delegates, and the following sentiments were expressed, which illustrate the spirit and character of the controversy :

Gouverneur Morris, of New Jersey, said "that he
 "could never concur in upholding domestic slavery.
 "It was a nefarious institution. It was the curse of
 "Heaven on the States where it prevailed; that he

“ would sooner submit himself to a tax, paying for all
 “ the negroes in the United States than saddle poster-
 “ ity with such a Constitution.”

Luther Martin, of Maryland, said “ That the insti-
 “ tution of slavery was inconsistent with the principles
 “ of the Revolution, and it was dishonorable to the
 “ American character to have such a feature in the
 “ Constitution.”

Col. George Mason, of Virginia, grandfather of
 James M. Mason, late United States Senator and Con-
 federate emissary to England, said: “ This infernal
 “ traffic originated in the avarice of British merchants.
 “ Slavery brings the judgment of Heaven on a country.
 “ By an inevitable chain of causes and effects, Provi-
 “ dence punishes national sins by national calam-
 “ ities.”

Mr. Madison, of Virginia, afterwards President, said:
 “ That it was wrong to admit in the Constitution the
 “ idea that there could be property in man.”

The entire sentiment of New England and the North
 was in favor of immediate or gradual emancipation,
 and averse to staining the pages of the Constitution
 by a grant of dominion and prerogative to the institu-
 tion. The voice of the members of two States was in
 decided opposition to the sentiments presented, and
 they adopted the motto: “ No slave trade—no Union.”

Mr. Pinckney, of South Carolina, said: “ South
 “ Carolina can never receive the plan (referring to
 “ the Constitution) if it prohibits the slave trade;
 “ but she should consider the rejection of the clause
 “ an exclusion of South Carolina from the Union.”

Mr. Rutledge, of South Carolina, said: "Religion and humanity had nothing to do with this question. Interest alone is the governing principle with Nations. The true question at present is whether the Southern States shall or shall not be parties to the Union."

The delegates of Georgia and South Carolina united in the declaration that if the slave trade was prohibited, they would not adopt the Constitution. They little thought that Georgia and Carolina would become famous for Sherman's victorious and desolating "march to the sea," over the prostrate form of the once imperial institution.

All were strongly and painfully impressed with the inadequacy of the system of government under the Articles of Confederation, and each felt conscious that the proposed system was a decided improvement thereon, and each hoped that its defects would soon be corrected in the natural course of things, and therefore were disposed to give it their sanction.

Alexander Hamilton, although some portions of the instrument were extremely repugnant, signed the same and urged others to do so as the only means of avoiding anarchy and confusion.

Roger Sherman, of Connecticut, said: "That he regarded the slave trade as iniquitous, but it was better, in his judgment, to allow the Southern States to import slaves than that this should be a cause of separation if they made it a *sine qua non*."

A majority, with reluctance, adopted the same conclusion. A compromise was effected. The fugitive

slave law, the counting of three-fifths of the slaves in the apportionment and the procrastination of the ordinance prohibiting the importation of slaves, became parts of the Constitution under the compulsory declaration, "no slave trade, no Union."

The Constitution bears date September 17, 1787, and soon afterwards was ratified by all the States, and the national calamities predicted by Mason and Jefferson were carried over for about a century and we have ourselves suffered the terrors of their fulfillment.

Thus the Ship of State, constructed in part of material inflammable and destructive in the highest degree, started on its perilous voyage with the most precious cargo of hopes and humanity that the world has seen.

THE PERILS OF THE GOVERNMENT.

After the adoption of the Constitution nothing occurred to test the strength of the government or strongly excite fears for its perpetuity until the session of Congress of 1819 and 1820. A bill was then pending in Congress to admit Missouri as a State. The question of prohibiting slavery within the limits of Missouri and in all the territory ceded by France to the United States, was discussed with great interest and violence in Congress and throughout the country. Public meetings were held, State resolutions were passed, and memorials were presented to Congress affirming and denying the power of Congress over the subject of slavery and the justice of its exercise. An excitement was produced that in extent and intensity

had had no parallel since the adoption of the Constitution. The violence of the agitation produced the most profound solicitude and alarm.

A compromise was effected by which Missouri was admitted into the Union without restriction, and slavery was prohibited in all the territory north of the line 36° 30'.

The compromise was the rainbow of peace to the nation. There was universal rejoicing over its adoption, and to it was attributed their escape from the thralldom of indescribable calamities and horrors.

NULLIFICATION.

The country was startled in 1832 by the declaration on the part of South Carolina that the passage of the tariff bill by Congress was a case of the exercise of deliberate, palpable and dangerous powers not granted by the Constitution ; that she had a right, and it was her duty, to interpose and arrest legislation of that character ; that according to the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions of 1798, which she approved, a State had a right to judge for itself as well of infractions as of the mode and measure of redress. A State Convention was called to consider and check what she termed "the usurpations of the general government." The convention adopted an ordinance declaring the tariff law null and void, and it unlawful for any officer of the general government to collect duties in South Carolina ; and enjoined upon the Legislature the duty of passing laws to give the ordinance effect. The Legislature convened in a few days thereafter and

passed extreme nullification measures, placing the State in a hostile attitude to the general government. Under the influence of Clay's compromise tariff bill of 1833, and the conciliatory effect of Jackson's powder and ball policy, the nullification measures were repealed or remained lifeless on the statute books.

THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW.

Again, in the year of 1850, the country was plunged into the wildest state of excitement by the renewal of the agitation of the slavery question. An effort was made to enforce, by legislation, that provision of the Constitution relating to the recapture of fugitive slaves. There was violent opposition to the passage of any bill that should make the free States the hunting ground for slaves, or that should compel a citizen of a free State to assist in the return of a fugitive to slavery.

This obnoxious clause had been forced into the Constitution under the most solemn protests; and the Act for its enforcement sent a thrill of dismay and terror through the land. So great was the exasperation of the people, that the reputation of the members from the North who voted for this measure, fell before an enraged constituency as if blighted by the wrath of Heaven.

THE REPEAL OF THE MISSOURI COMPROMISE.

The passage of the fugitive slave law filled the devotees of slavery with new hopes and zeal to extend the limits of and aggrandize the institution, and they

sought expedients to possess the ample fields devoted to freedom by the compromise of 1820. For this purpose the doctrine of popular sovereignty was canonized, and that the benefits of this wonderful principle might be experienced on this continent, in the year 1854 the Missouri Compromise law was repealed, and the contest with slavery renewed. This was the fatal act of the haughty and imperious institution. This violation of a solemn compact and breach of plighted faith cemented by law, reproduced the acrimonious antagonisms and altercations of three-quarters of a century, and excited in the north, in the highest degree, feelings of rage, madness, and desperation. Pandora's box was opened, and out of it rushed the furies armed with famine and sword, with pestilence and war. Kansas had the misfortune to become the theatre of the terrible contest to enlarge the dominion of human slavery. Murder, rapine, fraud, and every crime known on the earth or in hell was here perpetrated to crush freedom and exalt slavery.

In this contest liberty was triumphant, the slave propagandists found their Waterloo,—slavery doomed, recoiled within its proper limits. A lull followed. A temporary truce was had between the contending powers, broken by the election of Abraham Lincoln, the annointed one, chosen for the great work of emancipation.

The election of Abraham Lincoln was made the pretext for secession, dissolution, and war. In the conspiracy against the Union, South Carolina, bearing vauntingly aloft a strange flag, led the revolting States,

declaring through her leading exponent of opinion and purpose, the *Charleston Mercury*, that "upon the policy of dissolving the Union, of separating the South from her Northern enemies and establishing a Southern Confederacy, parties, papers, politicians and people are a unit."

Senator Iverson, of Georgia, in a speech delivered in the United States Senate, in 1860, said: "Sir, there is one path of safety for the South, but one mode of preserving her institution of domestic slavery; and that is a confederacy of States having no incongruous and opposing elements, a confederacy of slave States alone, with homogeneous language, laws, interests, and institutions." Nearly a century before, these States declared, "No slave trade, no Union," and forced upon the reluctant Sister States a system since pronounced piracy by law.

The impending catastrophe, so often postponed by compromise, could no longer be averted. No concession would be accepted. There could be no atonement for the offense of electing a friend of freedom to the chief magistracy of the republic. The sad time had come for Heaven to pour upon the country the woes and calamities foretold by Mason and Jefferson with volcanic power. The South, in its blindness and delirium, invoked Jehovah's retributive justice on their own heads for nature's long violated law in the person of the poor slave.

On the 12th of April, 1861, South Carolina let loose the thunders of war, hurling her missiles of death and destruction at the guards of the republic at Fort Sumter.

The Civil War extended until the whole South was engaged in a death grapple with the government. For four long years, and until the surrender of the commander-in-chief of the armies of the rebellion at Appomattox, war raged with relentless and terrific fury.

I should fail if I attempted to describe what you have witnessed—the scenes of four years of dread, terrific war; the long, wearisome and forced marches; the marshalling of armies; the preparations for combat; the repeated assault and defense; battles and sieges; rivers of blood flowing from piercing shot, bursting shell, and the sabre stroke; burning fever, delirium, and death from exposure in the scorching summer sun; in malarious swamps and pestilential districts; and on the wet freezing ground in sleety wintry nights on the battle-fields;—and you have also seen the friends of the republic triumphant, and heard the huzzas and felt the rapture of ultimate victory.

You have seen your comrades fall thick and fast around you, rank after rank depleted again and again, some to sleep their last sleep and some to continue long years disabled and suffering.

You have seen young life, richly endowed with talents, exuberant with affections and smiles, with all of its friendships and with all of its hopes and joys, surrendered up that the nation might live. More than three hundred thousand comrades have gone from fields of march and battle up to the mercy seat, up to the throne of God. They died in the service of their country and humanity.

O Father! may they not receive the benediction,

the encomium, that, as they have done this beneficial and charitable service unto Thy children, they have done it unto Thee; that, as they fell fighting for the suffering poor, they fell in Thy cause after Thine appointment, and shall receive their reward in the kingdom prepared for Thy meritorious children before the foundation of the world.

THE FRUITS OF THE VICTORY.

The victory has conclusively and forever established the supremacy of the constitution and the sovereignty of the United States.

It has settled the question permanently that the States of the Union are a nation, one people with one flag, one language, one system of government, founded on the equality of the rights of man.

Your victory burst the manacles of four millions of God's children and made them and their posterity free forever.

Among the important results of your victory is the removal of the cause of the "irrepressible conflict"—American Slavery—the prolific source of sectional animosity, political proscription, social ostracism, violence, conflict and rebellion. Happily the country is now freed from this powerful architect of dissension and disaster. This, the inspiring cause of disagreement and disunion, is permanently removed. Mason and Dixon's bloody line, along which the lightnings and tempests of a century's contention and passion had accumulated, has been swept away, and now broad fields are spread out on every side, where the flowers of peace and prosperity may bloom forever.

You brought out of the four years of conflict, out of the long night of woe--peace and victory; peace to fifty millions and their posterity, and victory not to arms alone, but to ideas and principles, to freedom and humanity.

Through your valor and success, civilization itself has triumphed, and the Higher Law teaching the doctrine of National responsibility, and that there is an inevitable chain of causes and effects linking together national sins and national calamities, is adopted as the Creed of Nations.

You have given us a land smiling in peace and rejoicing in plenty.

You have given us a land where liberty and order and law shall walk hand in hand in happy union forever.

Through your sufferings and heroism the republic, our republic, has been redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled.

The thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution of the United States, establishing equality, justice, and liberty, are the legitimate results of your labors. Your great work has been crowned by transferring these heavenly luminaries to the diadem of the republic.

The former fugitive no longer looks to the North Star for direction, safety, and liberty, but looks to the imperishable stars set by you on the nation's brow for the assurance of freedom for him and his posterity forever.

We are now reaping an abundant and priceless harvest where you have sown in blood.

To you belongs the transcendent glory of rescuing liberty from the thralldom in which she was cast by wanton rebellion and placing the Government on an enduring foundation. To you we are indebted for our peace at home and our standing abroad. To you we are indebted for whatever is valuable in our institutions and for the rising glories of the Republic.

As time advances the worth of your great services to your country and mankind will be more clearly seen and more highly appreciated, and coming generations will rise up and bless you for their fortunate birth and increased happiness, for the great good that you have conferred upon your country, your race and all mankind.

It is most gratifying that the people have crowned many of the immortal band of patriots with the reward of recognition and preferment for distinguished and meritorious services done their country.

Grant, Hayes and Garfield, soldiers of the Union, have, like Washington, been crowned by the peoples' sovereign will. This State has not been unmindful of the heroes of the late struggle.

We can all refer with pride to one of your number, General Miller, to whom is accorded the highest position in the Federal Councils that a State can bestow, and who is worthy—by virtue of distinguished and costly services in our country's cause, discriminating judgment, comprehensive intelligence, knowledge and experience in public affairs, great talents and lofty character untrammelled by factional or vexed complications—to occupy the highest position in the gift of a generous people.

The galaxy of brave men who have been most honored by the nation would become more lustrous by adding another star, and that from the Occident.

The career of the poor slave, who was from necessity deprived of books, arms and ambition, impoverished and trammelled that he might continue a slave, should not pass unnoticed nor unhonored. He acted his part well. At first he was guide, reporter, protector, and faithful friend. He fed, secreted, and escorted to places of safety his Northern deliverers. No charge of betrayal from avarice, disloyalty or persuasion is recorded against him. His devotion, loyalty and fidelity to the Union soldiers are matters of astonishment and admiration.

Fidelity that neither bribe nor threat
Could move or warp.

As the war progressed he was not an inattentive spectator of so sanguinary a contest involving the freedom of his race.

By degrees he acquired knowledge, ambition, and courage; and when called into the service of the United States, he became an important factor in crushing the rebellion of his masters, most cheerfully submitting to the severest labor and discipline, and displaying in hottest battle a coolness, earnestness, and bravery that have justly entitled him to high rank among those who have gained imperishable renown in their country's defense.

I cannot close this address without a tribute to the mothers and fathers and wives of our heroes.

To the mothers and fathers who tenderly, lovingly and patriotically surrendered their dear children to the fate of battle, to the carnage and havoc of war, and to the patriotic and heroic wives who gave a loving kiss and an encouraging good-bye to their husbands as they started for the fields of blood and victory, accepting cheerfully the chances of desolate and famishing widowhood for themselves, and sad and suffering orphanage for their children, that their country might be saved and their race be blessed, the country owes a measureless debt of gratitude.

The wives and mothers of the soldiers of the Union ought to be held in everlasting and grateful remembrance. May the benefactions of their countrymen attend them always, and may Heaven's richest gifts be theirs.

Soldiers, comrades and members of the George Thomas Post, of this branch of the Grand Army of the Republic, you have the honor of having borne an important part in achieving this greatness and grandeur for your country and the world.

Whatever satisfaction and felicity belong to noble actions, followed with grand and sublime results, are yours; yours to enjoy forever.

Those who have the highest appreciation of your gallant services and the greatest admiration of your character, conscious of their utter inability to make you a fitting return, might well pray:

"Oh! call not to my mind what you have done.

It sets a debt of that account before me,

Which shows me poor and bankrupt even in hopes."

But every patriot the wide world over, and every participant in the blessings scattered by you on every side with a bountiful hand, will unite in this sentiment:

“Yes ! rear thy guardian hero’s form
On thy proud soil, thou Western world ;
A watcher through each sign of storm
O’er freedom’s flag unfurled.





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